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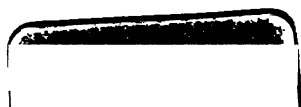


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The Holy Spirit

A Layman's Conception

1. Holy Spirit



ZF1

Washington



To Dr. John H. Finley
From ~~Ed~~ Mrs Washburn
with regards.

July 25/19



The Holy Spirit

A Layman's Conception

By

William Ives Washburn
Of the New York Bar



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WILLIAM IVES WASHBURN

The Knickerbocker Press, New York



To

**ONE I KNOW BEST OF ALL, AND WHO HAS A PROFOUND
INTEREST IN EVERYTHING THAT PERTAINS TO THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

40X387

“If I had the time to find a place
And sit me down full face to face
With my better self, that cannot show
In my daily life that rushes so;
It might be then I should see my soul
Was stumbling still toward the shining goal;
I might be nerved by the thought sublime,—
If I had the time!”

Richard Burton.



FOREWORD

NOT long ago, I listened to a sermon on the Holy Spirit by one of our most distinguished ministers, in the course of which he said that he found many young men and women in the colleges greatly perplexed and troubled over the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, his personality and work, and that he had resolved their doubts and made all things clear by explaining that the Holy Spirit was simply the spirit of love sent forth by God into the hearts and lives of men.

This idea, however luminous and satisfying to those addressed, did not appeal to me as adequate, and led to a succession of somewhat desultory thoughts which, collectively, may be termed a "Conception."

It should go without saying that there is no intentional failure to honor equally the Father and the Son, but in this connection

the sole aim is exclusively to emphasize the honor due to the Holy Spirit.

If these thoughts prove to be of interest, it will be chiefly to those who believe in the Scriptures, the quotations being from the American revised version with occasional use of the optional translations.

Indebtedness to others for their work, liberally appropriated when it suited my purpose, is frankly acknowledged, and there is no assumption of complete and competent treatment of an inexhaustible subject.

It is only in the hope that it may induce others to "think on these things," regardless of agreement with myself, that I venture to make public my "Conception."

W. I. W.

NEW YORK, August 1, 1917.

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The Holy Spirit

IGNORANCE

IT is recorded that in Ephesus, then a large and flourishing commercial city, the apostle Paul found certain disciples to whom he put the question, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" To which they replied, "Nay, we did not so much as hear whether there is a Holy Spirit."¹ Such disciples are not wholly unknown at the present time.

There are many good Christian people to whom the Holy Spirit is a mere name and who have but a vague idea of who He is and none whatever as to his office and relation to the world. If they think at all on the subject they dismiss it with the conclusion,

¹ Acts xix., 2.

The Holy Spirit

"Oh, well, the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God and what else matters. Jesus Christ, the Saviour, is enough for me!"

This is a serious matter. A man traveling in the cars was overheard saying to another, "Nothing is so disastrous to business as indifference." This aphorism applies equally well to everything else.

We live in an age when the habit of deep and clear thinking is confined to the few, and by the rest these are considered somewhat contemptuously as "back numbers."

The feeling prevailing is well expressed in Professor Genung's clever adaptation and application to this subject of the lines by Gelett Burgess:

"Back numbers are a drug to me,
I never want to see one;
Yet worse there is than ev'n to see,—
I'd rather see than be one."

As in Ephesus, all kinds of business and the so-called practical affairs of life prevail.

When a man dies, usually the first question is, "What was he worth?" meaning

thereby what did he achieve commercially or in the world of applied science, or, more commonly, how much money did he accumulate. In education, the trend inclines toward whatever is thought best adapted to produce immediate practical success. Latin and Greek culture, what good are they? "Let the dead bury their dead!"


History, philosophy, literature, why take time for those musty old records and speculations? *Carpe diem!* if that much Latin be permitted, is the principle, and all but the present and "practical" must be discarded. It is as though an architect should attempt a modern steel construction "sky scraper" without any study or information as to a safe, sane, and adequate foundation. This is not altogether new, for even in his time Pope makes one of his biting comments on those who

"damn all Shakespeare like the affected fool
At court, who hates whate'er he read at school."

For our own problems, are we to have no highly cultivated and deeply thinking men

and women, who hold communion with the great personalities of the past, gaining wide-ness of vision and broadening of mentality? This alone imparts a knowledge of the fail-ures or successes along different lines of men and women in former generations, and of the underlying eternal principles which led to them, so enabling detection and exposure of the fallacies of many so-called new theories or ideas, tested and exploded, sometimes over and over again, in the experience of mankind.

The influences of this age militate against deep and wide study and profound thinking. The habit of meditation is a lost art to a large degree. This tendency leads to a super-ficiality in investigation and expression, and to an undue emphasis upon the immediate and passing, with a corresponding neglect of the fundamental and enduring, both of which in part account for the ignorance prevailing in regard to the Holy Spirit. His presence is not now disclosed in a mighty, rushing wind, but in the still, small voice,



and this utterance is drowned and unheard in the midst of the roaring Babel and confusion of tongues.

Another reason is the sentiment so widely popular, evidenced by the expressions "Back to Jesus!" "What would Jesus do?" as though He, as He then lived on earth but transported to present surroundings and circumstances, were the only thing to be considered. It appears to be overlooked that all we know about Jesus is confined to the writings of men whom we believe to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit and that the real question now should be "What would Jesus have *me* do?" For an answer, we have no valid ground for mere speculation, but must apply the general principles which He laid down, and, for their interpretation and application to ourselves at the time of action, must again look for enlightenment and guidance to this same Holy Spirit.

The emphasis laid upon the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, the unique character, life, and words of Jesus

the Christ, his saving power and example, is worthy of all commendation, and lessons along these lines should be pressed home without relaxation or abatement, but is the consideration of these subjects, important and even vital as they are, practically to exclude direct and informative teaching as the Holy Spirit, his personality, his inspiration, his guidance, his comfort? Without Him, we should be in darkness. He is the light. Should we not strive to resolve this light into its prismatic colors and, as astronomers and physicists by this means can tell the composition and estimate the value of distant stars, so spiritually to endeavor to comprehend somewhat of the reality of his personality and the fundamental value and glory of his being and attributes?

We hear preaching on almost every conceivable theme, scriptural or found elsewhere, but rarely a sermon on the Holy Spirit, or allusion to Him except in a most cursory way in discourses upon other topics. A minister once said that he endeavored to preach one



sermon in each year upon this subject, and it is probable that he is an exception even to this extent. Estimate that he preaches an average of only fifty sermons in the course of a year; forty minutes of time and the proportion of one to forty-nine! It cannot be that this apparent neglect springs from a dearth of subjects or texts, for the Scriptures themselves are saturated with them in infinite variety from cover to cover.

Evidently, preaching on the Holy Spirit and his work is simply crowded out by the great number of other things, considered more important or more interesting, and this rich field of thought, with its possibility of abundant harvests, if cultivated, is left in large degree to lie fallow.

There is therefore no occasion for surprise at the prevailing ignorance. It is all very well to recommend the reading of the Scriptures for one's self and so acquire knowledge, but stimulation and aid are required for full development. Many men and women cannot understand without a teacher, and teach-

ers are expected to teach. The Ethiopian eunuch was sitting in his chariot reading a portion of the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot." Philip heard the man reading and said, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" And he replied, "How can I, except some one shall guide me?"¹ The case is typical.

The Christian church is charged, unjustly and yet with some superficial force, with being devitalized and inefficient. Articles have been written in reviews arguing with gravity that its day is ended and that it, as an organizing power and social influence, is moss-grown and superannuated. That it should be relegated to the past as outgrown, and superseded by something else, somewhat indefinitely prescribed. Is not this not in part the fault of the church itself? Without the recognized abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, any church deserves the criticism. It was the Holy Spirit that sent the messages

¹ Acts viii., 27-31.



of reproof, of warning, of condemnation, of commendation and of blessed assurance, for after each message it is written, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."¹

Recent books on the subject are extremely few and our current hymnology betrays the same dearth of information and appreciation. In one of the best and very widely used volumes there are but ten hymns under the heading of "Holy Spirit" out of six hundred and twenty-seven selections!

We need a revival of knowledge of the Holy Spirit, a renaissance of instruction, that our ministers and people alike may have a quickened insight into the character, power, and service of this too much neglected Person of the Godhead. He is the one personality of the Trinity with whom we have directly to deal, the divine Agent through whom we have the other Two and by whom They are made manifest; the sacred Avenue of

¹ Revelation ii. and iii.

communication between Them and ourselves and between us and Them.

The knowledge will cause a great awakening and revivification. We are guilty if we do not strive to become enlightened ourselves and seek to dissipate this generally prevailing ignorance, for ignorance is not to be considered innocence and is no valid excuse. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent,"¹ and the Master Himself indicated the fundamental importance of having his disciples pay honor to the Holy Spirit equal to that rendered to the Father and the Son, when He directed that all should be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.²

¹ Acts xvii., 30.

² Matthew xxviii., 19.




MYSTERY

THE finite can never hope to comprehend the infinite. The greatest human intellect is limited by time, place, circumstance, by capacity infinitesimal and ignorance colossal in comparison with the conception of a mind that is all-embracing, unlimited, originally creative, and omnipresent, that knows no time, is confined to no place, that occasions and controls circumstances, and to which all things, visible and invisible, everywhere, even the thoughts of other minds, are an open book.

Most men believe that there is a God and to that God they attribute at least infinite mind—hence mystery. Mystery is simply lack of understanding, and we are surrounded by it on all sides all the days of our lives. Of course, what is mysterious to some men is perfectly clear to others. The myste-

ries of one generation are sometimes the commonplaces of another. Little by little the veil has been pushed back and men see further into things, learning cause and effect, and utilizing what are called inventions or discoveries for benefit or profit, but the veil is still there, the ultimate cause is never discovered, and beyond the ken of the boldest astronomers still sweeps the boundless space of infinity, while the keenest endeavors to solve the everlasting "Why" in every department of physical research inevitably come ultimately to a blank wall.

A child can ask questions that no learned man can answer. He may multiply words but at the end the child will still say, "Why?" Two and two make four, why? There are certain things we call basic or principles, make short statements of them, style them axioms, and say that they are self-evident and must be taken as true. Why? Only because upon them can be reared logically a mental or physical structure that answers our requirements or fits in with the general




order of things. But the foundation, the arbitrary statement, does not answer the "why." We say "it is so because it is so," but still, "Why?"

The human body is a wonderful machine. What happens when the machine stops? We all know at a glance the difference between a body we call dead and the living man. We say life has gone. What *is* life? What or who is it that looks out upon us through the living eye? What *is* thought? Is it merely the reaction of certain cells of the brain to outward impressions, a sort of vibration, or is it the something within playing upon these same cells as an instrument of internal expression? How is it effected in either case? No explanation is a final solution. So we might go on as to feeling, hearing, speech, and action. When what we call life is gone the machine may be perfect, or it may not; but it is impervious to any response or action. Life has departed, the mind is not there, personality has vanished. Who has or can define the all im-

portant principle of being that we call life, clearly, adequately, or completely? The mechanism can be and has been explained but not the vitalizing agency.

Obviously, therefore, the personality of God, regarded as infinite in mind, must always be mysterious to man possessed only of a finite mind. However much this finite mind may expand, however far it may extend its knowledge, it will still be finite and limited. Therefore, man will never fully comprehend and understand God, either in his personality, his being, or his creative and conductive power.

From all this is seen the illogical position of those who say, "We will not believe what we cannot understand," and the difficulty of those who attempt to make clear the unknown and explain the unexplainable. Why not accept as axiomatic some things in the spiritual world as we are forced to do in the material, if only they seem to be valid premises from which can be drawn conclusions that fit in best and form a



working theory or hypothesis of being and action?

The Founder of Christianity did not attempt to explain the mystery surrounding the Holy Spirit or his operations, for He said, "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."¹

Most Christians believe in the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth and think that the record of his life on the earth, his work, his acts, and the marvelous effects of his teaching are of this sufficient evidence. But they also believe in God the Father, whom Jesus frequently addressed in prayer as a separate personality from whom He received directions and commands. At the same time, He claimed co-existence and identity with God the Father. "I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I am."² I AM was one of God's names for Himself,³ and it was perfectly clear to the hearers that Jesus

¹ John iii., 8. ² John viii., 58. ³ Exodus iii., 14.

affirmed Himself actually to be God. "I and the Father are one."¹ "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."² "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me."³ Many other passages might be quoted to the same effect.

Here then we find the real thing, the personal entity within the body claiming identity with another personal entity, in other words, *two* persons yet *one* person, a conception incredible to the finite mind and for which the limitations of human language prohibit the possibility of a satisfying definition. Yet this conception is accepted and believed by most Christians. Is this not the limit of the mysterious? Can anything more contrary to unaided human reason be advanced?

Having accepted this, if the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is plainly taught in the Scriptures, is it any more mysterious that three personalities or entities should exist separate yet one, each in each other and all

¹ John x., 30.

² John xiv., 9.

³ John xiv., 11.




in one God? The use of the terms "Father," "Son," "Spirit" do not imply necessarily relationship of the same character as we employ them to designate mortal relationships, but are the outcome of the endeavor to convey in imperfect human speech the idea, as far as it can be understood, which really is very little, by finite intelligence, of the co-existence of three personalities co-equal and united in one from all eternity. The Holy Spirit is called the third personality of the mysterious Trinity yet Unity, not in point of time, or as being in any way inferior, but simply to distinguish Him in his apparent sphere of work and influence. To our minds, there must be *some* order if we are to think or speak of three things. Another order than the one commonly adopted might be equally correct, but the terms employed hitherto to identify the personalities would make it strange to our ears.

In addition, it aids our imperfect comprehension to think of God the Father as the source and conservator of all life, in whom

we live and move and have our being, of God the Son as God incarnate, the way, the truth, and the life, and of the Holy Spirit as the revealer, teacher, and guide, the one by whom the others are made manifest and through whom all of the Three yet One dwell within us.

The paucity of language prevents a clear statement which conveys the full meaning of such a conception, nor can our limited reason alone accept it as within the bounds of possibility, but, abstractly, if we can accept and believe that two separate personalities can exist actually as one yet two, there is no additional strain in believing that *three* personalities can have a like separate yet merged existence.

It is a matter within the sphere of revelation and belief, not of human reason, despite the many and complicated attempts at its solution by philosophers and theologians. There is no denying the mystery, but it is only like all other mysteries, a lack of understanding what we are mentally incapable of



understanding, but which possibly we may understand better hereafter, when we shall know even as also we are known. Therefore, there is no real ground for disbelief in his divine personality and individual influence upon men, in the mere fact that mystery surrounds the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

PERSONALITY

“NO man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”¹; that is, He made Him manifest as to his personality, spirit, and attributes. The writer does not say that He describes Him as to his appearance, and it is a fact to be noted that neither of God nor of Jesus Christ is there any description by which an image or portrait can be created. Great artists have attempted to do this and in regard to Christ have achieved results in some instances, to some men, in some moods, to some extent, satisfactory. Art deals largely with the external and visible, and it is only when the artist has endeavored to portray the spirit of Christ shining through the body that even this measure of success has been attained, but it is

¹ John i., 18.



well to remember that all such images and portraits are purely imaginary and no two look alike.

It is the most natural thing to anthropomorphize the Divine Being, that is, to conceive of Him in the similitude and with the qualities of man. This is seen clearly in every mythology. The gods, except where animals were worshiped, were simply immortal men or women of extraordinary abilities and powers and often possessing many of the weaknesses of mortals. Against this tendency we must be constantly on guard, for "God is a Spirit"¹; his thoughts are not our thoughts; neither are our ways his ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways and his thoughts than our thoughts, and his ways are past tracing out.²

Common curiosity causes us at times to wish that we could see God in a bodily form if He be a person, and Christ having in fact for a time possessed a mortal body,

¹ John iv., 24.

² Isaiah lv., 8, 9. Romans xi., 33.

the desire with many is strong to look upon it, even though simulated only by sculpture or the painter's skill.

But gratification of this curiosity, reverent though it be, has been denied, and the body with which man is clothed is honored in the New Testament only as being the temple of the indwelling personality or the abode of the Holy Spirit. The Son of man declared, "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing."¹ This does not mean, of course, that the body is not to be cared for and protected as far as possible, for it is not only the dwelling place of the real personality, but also the medium of its activity and usefulness, and it cannot be questioned successfully that the condition of the body exerts a strong reflex influence upon its inhabitant.

There are many doubting Thomases who would fain *see* the embodied Jesus and require the evidence of the physical senses, but He rebukes Thomas and all like him when He

¹ John vi., 63.



says: "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."¹

The general usage of the word personality is inclusive of the body, the appearance, the form that appears before us and is seen with the eyes, and one of the chief values in the human life of Jesus was the incarnation of God in the body and through this medium revealing in close touch and in ways to which finite minds are accustomed, the personality, character, and beneficent attributes of the Divine Being, more clearly and effectually than any other means of communication could have accomplished.

But, speaking more accurately, we can readily understand that the body is not indispensable, the real personality is something that is within, out of sight and out of physical touch; what we call the mind and soul and spirit. Whether these be one and the same thing or not, is immaterial in this connection. In other words, the body

¹ John xx., 29.

and its operations can be seen, but the real personality is invisible. Christ illustrates this when He says, "there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things that proceed out of the man are those that defile the man," and explains that the things from without are physical and cannot touch the man within, but the things from within are from the heart of man, or mentality, such as thoughts that are evil and eventuate in evil deeds, these defile the man.¹ Even murder and adultery can be committed potentially without outward action.² In effect, it is not the body that suffers the real defilement, but the mind, soul, and spirit living within.

The reason is clear. Personality is not physical; it is what, for want of a better phrase, we may call pure spirit. It has no form, it is a condition, an existence without shape or form. Deep thinkers have done as well as they could in definitions by saying "personality is the sum total of the

¹ Mark vii., 15-23.

² Matthew v., 21, 22; 27, 28.



normal conscious processes and their manifestations," or, "the consciousness of the unity of self," or "self-consciousness of thought." This applies to ourselves. The something within us not only thinks and reasons, and while confined to the body directs its actions, but somehow can stand apart and contemplate and analyze its own workings, a critic of itself.

But as to others, it is more simple. The something within us recognizes and grasps the consciousness of the unity of another person with far greater ease than when it strives to define itself. In other words, the I within me knows that it is I and no one else, and also knows that the You in another is equally and individually the You of that other, but the I cannot *see* the You. From this it follows that if no man has seen God, it is equally true that no man has ever seen himself or any other person, in this real sense. We are therefore actually in the world of the spiritual and eternal, not in that of the physical appearance and transient.

It is hard for us to conceive of a person without a definite location and some defined shape, and our ideas of God become very much beclouded when we attempt it, but if we bear in mind what has been said of personality and try to think of the personality of God as personifying itself to infinity, we shall realize the difficulty confronting any finite mind of attempting to imagine or confine such an infinite and omnipresent spirit to a body or shape of any sort or in any degree adequate.

Hence, the fact that the Holy Spirit is nowhere indicated as having a bodily presence and cannot be seen is no argument against his personality, or his recognition by us in the same way in which we recognize other personalities which we cannot see or grasp by any physical means.

We recognize and use our reason as to other human personalities by observation of the actions which they compel the body to perform, or more commonly, and, as our human spirit ordinarily does not communi-



cate directly with others except by the employment of some physical medium, we become acquainted and form our judgments in that way; for example, by words spoken, which are simply vocalized thoughts or mind processes conveyed to the real us through the ear, or words written, which are only the same thing in more permanent form expressed through the hand directed by the mind and conveyed to our real selves through the eye. There also appears to be a pervasive influence of some sort emanating from one individual and affecting others favorably or unfavorably and leading to estimates and conclusions at which we arrive by what is called intuition.

Referring to the Holy Spirit, countless thousands have testified to what they believed to be the pervasive influence, and the theory of his personality, better than any other, fits in with what facts we have and is more in accord with ordinary rational processes than any other. In the Scriptures, He is represented as a being self-conscious of his unity and his thoughts; He being the sum

total of his conscious processes and their manifestations. Search the Scriptures with this conception in mind and the logical conclusion is inevitable, and this is personality. The mystery of three personalities yet one personality has been considered elsewhere, but here we are concerned only with the personality of the Holy Spirit.

Christ Himself bears indirect but powerful testimony in this regard, where He says, "All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme; but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin,"¹ or still more d'stinctively, as it is given elsewhere, "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in that which is to come."²

¹ Mark iii., 28, 29.

² Matthew xii., 32. Luke xii., 10.



Here there is a very evident separation of the Holy Spirit from the other persons of the Godhead. Pardon may be sought and obtained for all manner of sins against the other two, but the sin against the Holy Spirit, whatever that may be, is said to be unforgivable either here or hereafter. What special force could there be to such a condemnation as between offences, if the offences against the Holy Spirit were not an offence against a definite and individual personality, as is so clearly indicated? So, too, throughout the four Gospels, in the best texts and translations, where allusion is made to the Holy Spirit, the word "He" not "It" is employed with great uniformity. The pronoun is the embodied concept of a distinct and complete person. In at least two passages, He speaks in the first person singular: "The Spirit said unto him" (Peter), "Behold three men seek thee. But arise and get thee down, and go with them nothing doubting; for *I* have sent them."¹ The Holy Spirit said, "Separate

¹ Acts x., 19, 20.

me, Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I* have called them."¹

Those living in the time of Jesus Christ had the same opportunity to recognize the personality of the Holy Spirit as we now have of other personalities within bodily coverings, and we have the records for our enlightenment. According to the belief of two of the Gospel writers, the Holy Spirit was the person of the Trinity by whose agency the birth of the Son in the flesh was accomplished,² and all four concur in the statement that at the time of his baptism by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in a very special manner and abode with Him.³

It is to be noted that though Jesus, as a man, was thirty years old, there is no record of his teaching or performing any of the mighty works until after this special coming to Him of the Holy Spirit. Immediately,

¹ Acts xiii., 2.

² Matthew i., 18, 20. Luke i., 35.

³ Matthew iii., 16. Mark i., 10. Luke iii., 22. John i., 32.



full of the Holy Spirit, He is led in the Spirit in the wilderness for the period of trial,¹ and on his emergence from this place, or possibly condition of mind, He returned in the power of the Spirit,² and his active ministry of preaching and healing begins. In the synagogue at Nazareth at the opening of his work, Jesus read as his text the passage from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach," and proceeded, "This day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears."³ He recognized the fact that He, Himself, speaks the words of God through the power of the Holy Spirit,⁴ and hence rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.⁵

His immediate followers also accepted this to be the truth. God "anointed him" (Jesus) "with the Holy Spirit and with power,"⁶ and "power" in this relation is always coupled with the Holy Spirit. "In the power of the Holy Spirit," "in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the

¹ Luke iv., 1.

² Luke iv., 14.

³ Luke iv., 17-21.

⁴ John iii., 34.

⁵ Luke x., 21.

⁶ Acts x., 38.

Holy Spirit.”¹ “In demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”² “In power and in the Holy Spirit.”³

When about to depart from his disciples, Jesus promises them that He will not leave them comfortless; both the Father and He will come to them, make their abode with them, and be with them even unto the end of the world; but how? Through and by the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in his name.⁴ Thus He identified Himself completely with the Holy Spirit, as He had with the Father, for in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.⁵

In the most profoundly written treatise of Paul, he indicates clearly this identity of Jesus Christ, as present with his followers, with the Holy Spirit: “But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of

¹ Romans xv., 13, 19.

² I Thessalonians i., 5.

³ Colossians ii., 9.

⁴ I Corinthians ii., 4.

⁵ John xiv., 16-26.



his"; and in another epistle: "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."²

The essential unity of the Godhead is the principle of this reciprocity; we know Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and we know the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ.

As has been seen, the personality of the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at the time of his baptism and abode within Him thereafter in a very special sense. Jesus came into the flesh for at least one express purpose, namely, to die for the redemption of mankind, and, whatever be the theory of the atonement, it is certain that He regarded his death upon the cross as the consummation of his work upon the earth for the salvation of the world. If this can be considered as the free offering of Himself and Himself only, in accordance with the will of the Father, is it not conceivable that just before the end, in that awful hour when even the sun veiled its face and darkness covered the land, the Holy Spirit, in this special sense of indwelling

¹ Romans viii., 9.

² I Corinthians xii., 3.

personality, then, and not till then, withdrew, leaving the personality of the Son alone to carry out upon the cross the purpose for which He came and to which He was constantly looking forward with self-devotion? At least, this suggestion explains well his crying out with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"¹

Whether this last thought be warranted or not, valid ground has been found for the belief that dwelling within the bodily clothing of the personality of the Son was also the personality of the Holy Spirit, and if the Son on earth declared and made known the personality, characteristics and attributes of God the Father, He also manifested and revealed the personality of God the Holy Spirit. Hence, as far as we can become acquainted with Jesus Christ through his life, words, acts, and effects produced, as recorded in the Scriptures, without considering personal experience, we can recognize and appreciate the personality of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Matthew xxvii., 45, 46. Mark xv., 33, 34.



INDWELLING

ONE distinction between the religion of the Scriptures, especially as taught and illustrated with the utmost clarity in the New Testament, and religion as depicted in the writings of so-called heathen or idolatrous peoples, is in the ascribed locality of the object of veneration and worship. The latter regarded their god or gods as something distinctly outside of themselves and apart from men, usually giving them a definite place of abode, and not conceiving of the same god being in more than one place at one and the same time.

Only a very few philosophers and poets entertained a vague and uncertain idea of spirituality as now understood, or of its general pervasiveness, though the gods were presented sometimes as mingling, seen or unseen, among mortals, and occasionally

taking possession of their bodies with some specific design in view, or to commit, or cause them to commit, some action which the particular god was not considered capable of doing without the disguise thus adopted.

On the other hand, the very foundation of Christian religion is the belief that God is not only above and beyond us, with no place that can definitely be described as his home, He being omnipresent, but also that He dwells within the individual man, stamping his impression upon his character and striving continually from within to enlighten his inward vision, attain supremacy over his thoughts and emotions, and influence his will while leaving him perfect freedom of choice in the exercise of that will. "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"¹

Occasionally this indwelling is recognized in the Old Testament as, for example, when David after his great sin cries out, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not

¹ I Corinthians iii., 16; vi., 19. Ephesians ii., 22.



thy Holy Spirit from me.”¹ Almost any theory of the inspiration of the Scriptures demands it in the case of the several authors and the prophets, but the indwelling of God in man generally is promised in its highest and most complete sense to the followers of Jesus Christ, and the immediate person of the Godhead who thus makes his abiding place is the Holy Spirit. The forerunner of Jesus prophesied that He should baptize men in the Holy Spirit²; but it is interesting to observe that the only recorded instance of his so baptizing personally is where about to leave his disciples, “He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.”³ Even this does not appear to have been fully accomplished, for He also said, “Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence,”⁴ a promise fulfilled with special manifestations on the day of Pentecost. He commanded his followers, however, in making disciples to baptize into

¹ Psalms li., 11.

² Mark i., 8. Luke iii., 16.

³ John xx., 22.

⁴ Acts i., 5.

the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.¹

The New Testament instances but four, besides his own mother, as being filled in a special sense with the Holy Spirit prior to the birth of Christ, these being his kinsman according to the flesh, John the Baptist, John's parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, and the aged Simeon,² and the promises of Jesus that the Holy Spirit should be specially given were made to his disciples, and those who should thereafter become his followers. He wanted all men to follow Him and commanded to make disciples of all nations, but his chief interest at that time was in those who had accepted Him or should thereafter give themselves to Him. "I pray not for the world, but those whom thou hast given me; . . . neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word."³

His promises to them were that the Holy

¹ Matthew xxviii., 19.

² Luke i., 15, 41, 67; ii., 25.

³ John xvii., 9, 20.

Spirit should be given to them as an abiding and indwelling presence, and that through the medium of this divine personality both the Father and the Son should come and make their abode with each of them. The Gospel according to John makes this as clear, direct, and positive as is possible for human speech addressed to human understanding, in the wonderful discourse at the Last Supper with his intimate companions, who were in sorrow and perplexity at his announced approaching departure.¹

Following the death of Jesus, the fulfillment of these promises is stated to have been accompanied with visible manifestations, in the case of the apostles with a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind, and appearances like tongues of flame distributing themselves among them,² and on another occasion the place where they were was shaken.³ So, afterwards, there seemed to be some indications of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in the case of converts, for this was perceived

¹ John xiv., xv., xvi. ² Acts ii., 2, 3. ³ Acts iv., 31.

outwardly by others,¹ but, later on, the Holy Spirit is recognized and felt to be dwelling within individuals without the time of his coming being outwardly or visibly marked.

The apostle Peter interprets the promise as given to all who repent of their sins and believe in Christ, and, as the command was given to disciple all nations, it follows that the indwelling Holy Spirit may be the guest of every man everywhere provided he complies with these conditions. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him."² The call is to all. It is left to the free will of man to accept or reject the gift. It is to be had for the sincere asking. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much

¹ Acts viii., 17, 18; x., 44; xix., 6.

² Acts ii., 38, 39.



more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."¹

The fact that the Holy Spirit is dwelling in a man is known to him in several ways. The relationship is of the most intimate character:

"Closer is He than breathing,
Nearer than hands and feet."

No one possesses Him in large measure without his own personality feeling and recognizing the presence of something different from himself which moves him, in a way he scarcely knows how, yet very perceptibly, to think thoughts which ordinarily he would not have thought, to say things when unstimulated he would have been silent, arousing emotions otherwise dormant, and inciting to actions which alone he would not have attempted. He may wonder what this can be, but he is compelled to recognize it as something spiritual, not material, something within, not from without.

¹ Luke xi., 13.

One string of a musical instrument vibrates and responds to the vibrating string of another with which it is in harmonious accord, the key or pitch being identical. In like manner, if what a man thinks, feels, says, and does, is founded on love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, he may have assurance that he is enjoying the presence of the Holy Spirit, for these are his keynotes.¹

Also, if any man can honestly and from his heart affirm that Jesus is Lord, he may be confident, for no man can believe and say this but in the Holy Spirit.² "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him."³ If one is filled with love of God, he may know that this was shed abroad into his heart through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to him, as declared by a man upon whom it had been bestowed in abundance.⁴ If he feels that he is really a child of God, and can from his heart call him Father,

¹ Galatians v., 22, 23.

² I Corinthians xii., 3.

³ I John v., 10.

⁴ Romans v., 5.



his inward personality knows that it is led by the Spirit of God and the Spirit Himself bears witness with his own spirit that he is such a child.¹ In other words, to be a Christian and live the Christian life, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is indispensable and self-evident.

There is a consciousness of right and wrong implanted in all men, weak among the ignorant and degraded but stronger in the informed and elevated individuals and races, especially among those religiously inclined, which commonly is called the conscience. This commends or condemns what we think and what we do as the result of our thoughts. This inward monitor speaks of its own volition without will or choice on our part and acts with entire independence of our wishes, often contrary to them. When we have done wrong "conscience does make cowards of us all." We know that it is there, yet not a part of our controlled personality. This voice of conscience can be nothing

¹ Romans viii., 14-16. Galatians iv., 6.

else than the channel of communication for the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. The poet Byron, in the *Island* well expresses this idea in verse:

“Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through gain's silence and o'er glory's
 din;
Whatever creed be taught or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God.”

In the words of Christ, the Holy Spirit is to “convict the world,” the world being made up of individuals, “in respect of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment,”¹ and the writer to the Hebrews, paraphrasing Jeremiah, declares that the Holy Spirit bears witness, “I will put my laws on their heart and upon their mind also will I write them”; again, quoting from the Psalmist, “Wherefore even as the Holy Spirit saith, ‘Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts,’ ”² while Paul testifies, “My conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit.”³ It is quite evident

¹ John xvi., 8.

² Hebrews iii., 7, 8; x., 15, 16.

³ Romans ix., 1.

therefore that the conscience is certainly one instrumentality which the Holy Spirit employs in his dealings with mankind, and as the conscience is a mental, spiritual process or faculty within us, it can be reached and stirred to action only by another spiritual personality within, moving upon it and through it for the purpose of communication with our own personalities.

It is true that the conscience is not infallible and, unenlightened, has often misled. The Hindoo mother throwing her infant to the crocodiles, the worshipers of Moloch placing the human sacrifice in his red-hot arms, the persecutions of Saul before he became Paul, are apt illustrations out of many that might be adduced, but such misleading can be traced always to one of two things, either ignorance arising from erroneous or defective education, for the conscience itself can be educated, or to an habitual and persistent disregard of the voice within. The Spirit can be grieved and can be quenched.¹

¹ Ephesians iv., 30. I Thessalonians v., 19.

It is to be recalled that we are told that there are subtle spiritual influences about us and within us, adverse to what is right and pure and uplifting, against which there is the warning, "believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God"¹; the test is given to distinguish between the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error. The Spirit of God witnesses to the coming in the flesh of Jesus Christ with all that that implies. He does not speak as the world speaks. He reveals the love of God shown in the sending of his Son and the love that men should have one for another. He teaches that by this love abiding in us, we are affiliated to God and brought into fraternal relations with our fellows. This thought alone is rich in suggestiveness.

Materialists declare that ideas like these are irrational, foolish, and sentimental, but to such may be commended the reply of Christ, when those who believed in neither angel nor spirit propounded to Him what they had framed

¹ I John iv., 1.

as a practically unsolvable question. "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God." Jesus repudiated the materialists of his day, the Sadducees, warning his disciples to take heed and beware of their teaching.¹ The spiritual world is on quite another and radically different plane from the material world and spiritual things can be discerned only by the spiritually minded.

To abide under the shadow of the Almighty is the sum and substance of the inward Christian life, and the beloved disciple, referring to the Almighty, sends the message, "he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us."²

¹ Matthew xxii., 23-29; xvi., 11-12.

² I John iii., 24.

INSPIRATION

DIFFERENT theories have prevailed in regard to this most important subject and much disputation, not free at times from extreme bitterness. The question has been divided along two lines of thought. One segregates the Scriptures from every other collection of writings and treats the matter of their inspiration as a thing apart from all else, and the other considers generally the inspiration of individual members of the human race by this influence outside of themselves, yet within them, which we call the Holy Spirit.

Really, the whole question is one and the same, because the Scriptures themselves were written by or through human instrumentality and if they are inspired, the inspiration first must have influenced and in some sense directed and controlled

the writers. If, therefore, a conclusion as to the inspiration of the Scriptures can be reached satisfactory to any degree, remembering that finite and hence limited minds are dealing with the workings of an infinite, all-powerful, all-wise, and omnipresent Spirit, no insuperable difficulty will prevent understanding to some extent the inspiration of the individual human being by the Holy Spirit, whether it be to the same intent and purpose or otherwise. The general question is considered elsewhere under Indwelling and Service but the present line of thought is concerned only with the writings said to be specially inspired.

Many have taken the ground, and some are still left among us who demand assent to the statement, that our English translation of the Bible, or at least the Hebrew and Greek text, is inspired in such a sense that every word from the beginning to the last is the veritable word of God, or at least dictated by Him, and therefore sacred, and denounce as unbelievers any who may venture to differ

from this conclusion. They base this upon Paul's second letter to Timothy, wherein, according to King James' version, he says "All scripture is given by inspiration of God,"¹ but fail to notice that even in this version the "is" is in *italics*, indicating that it is not in the original, and the best translation we now have reads, "Every scripture inspired of God."

How is it possible to accept this teaching of literal inerrancy or even plenary inspiration of every book, chapter, and verse of the English Bible? In the first place, the books of which it is composed are not originals, but translations and re-translations. In the next place, there are extant different versions from which they were translated, and one great work of the translators has been to collate and compare between two and three thousand ancient versions, to harmonize the manuscripts, and to get back as near as possible to the original writings, for there is not any first writing that is known, and

¹ II Timothy iii., 16.

the differences in those manuscripts that exist show clearly that they are copies or versions of pre-existing copies or originals.

There is enough to indicate that we have closely, and in some cases apparently with accuracy, reproduced these original writings of the Gospels, for there are at least two versions made in the second century; but what a thrill would go through the Christian world if even one original manuscript book of the New Testament were to be discovered and authenticated. The discovery of the so-called "Logia," or sayings of Christ, made some years ago, disclosed this sufficiently.

Take, as an example of the difficulty, the first three Gospels. The time when probably each was written has been fixed approximately by valid evidence not necessary here to be adduced. Mark was written first, Matthew and Luke somewhat later. If the three are examined with studious observation, it is clearly seen that Matthew and Luke make free use of Mark's Gospel, but

that there are in their versions of the Gospel things not in Mark, or found in the text of one of these writers and not in that of the other, pointing to the existence of some older then existing manuscript or manuscripts or at least to matters and sayings transmitted orally. Luke himself says that there were many narratives in his possession when he determined to write his version of the Gospel.¹

Besides, it is to be remembered that Jesus, whose life and teachings they all three portray, spoke in Aramaic. The first accounts were written undoubtedly in that language, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke as we now have them are in Greek, though Matthew, or earlier *Logia* written by him, was probably originally in Aramaic. Greek has always been regarded as the authentic text even in the early Latin church. Instances like this could be multiplied, and into what endless confusion do they throw the mind called upon to accept this doctrine or theory of the

¹ Luke i., 1, 2.

verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the English Bible, or even the plenary theory which insures practically the same result. Fortunately, it is not necessary. The Scriptures do not claim it for themselves.


It is well perhaps to assert in the usual way "The Bible is the word of God," but far more accurate to say "The Bible *contains* the word of God." With all the variations of the different versions, accurate and searching scholarship has demonstrated that we have, speaking generally, a trustworthy report of the life, sayings, and miracles of Jesus Christ while upon the earth. The Gospels, the Acts, and without dispute most of the Epistles, are now regarded by an overwhelming majority of experts as essentially and fully proven to be genuine, what they purport to be, and reliable. The record is not complete, in fact, John, with some hyperbole, states that it is far from so being,¹ but there is enough amply to reveal the personality of the Son and through Him the

¹ John xx., 30; xxi., 25.

personalities of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is essentially a spiritual book. It does not pretend to be a text book of physics, geography, geology, zoölogy or medicine. It would not be difficult to point out errors and mistaken statements in any of these departments. So too, Peter and Paul, in common with others, were mistaken in some of their beliefs and teachings, one being as to the time of the general resurrection and the visible return of Christ, which they considered immediately at hand in their day.

The Scriptures are, however, a succession of writings by different men in different ages, who without collaboration produced, when taken together, a volume of wonderful spiritual unity. The relation of God to man and man to God, involving the relation of man to man, is its underlying theme, developed with constantly increasing fullness and clearness, and culminating in the Gospels, the other books of the New Testament



being largely illustrative or explanatory of this underlying current of thought or devoted to the bringing out and enforcement of its necessary implications.

The Scriptures themselves are honest. Many times the sins of the very men who wrote are disclosed without gloss or palliation, and no strain is put upon our credulity. They were simply men like ourselves and needed forgiveness and pardon. How then can we believe that writings containing mistakes and produced by erring mortals were inspired by the Holy Spirit, all-wise and infallible? By the use of the sense we call common, but which in reality is somewhat rare.

It must be clear that the Holy Spirit in communicating with men through men must use such instrumentalities as were at hand, and, by a selective process having determined upon the person as a vehicle, He took him just as he was, with his natural strength, weakness, and tendencies. While dwelling within, He did not proceed to give him what

we should call a general education in material things or even succeed in so uplifting him that he conformed to our moral standards in every respect.

It would be a surprising thing if the residence of Creator of life produced no effect upon the created. Undoubtedly, the intellect was brightened and original powers strengthened by this close contact, but in the main it is clear that the authors were taken and utilized as they were naturally. They continued to be men of their own age in the world's history and advanced only as far as their own generation had progressed in matters temporal, but possessed of wonderful spiritual possibilities, in many instances of a literary genius that has made certain books of the Bible classics in style and composition.

The Holy Spirit undoubtedly was in them and his work in them was spiritual, arousing in them thoughts of God, though sometimes crude in idea and expression and not wholly in harmony with our present conception of Him; clarifying the vision so as to perceive

the meaning and trend of passing events; voicing duty to be performed or evil to be shunned; enabling them to know and teach the right as far as they could receive it; stirring them up to condemn the wrong; making it clear to them that they had a message for other men and that that message was from God; in many cases giving insight into the future; all this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The men were not made over into prodigies of what we call learning; they had their limitations; and they sometimes yielded to temptation and sinned, just as good men among us do now, but their repentance, punishment, and forgiveness also are set forth; and with reference to the Old Testament, it is to be borne in mind constantly that the full revelation did not come until after the advent of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit did not inspire all of them to the same degree or in the same way,¹ and revealed only such truth as they were capable of

¹ Hebrews i, 1.

receiving and transmitting; at times, even more than could be comprehended and acted upon by their own generation.

Jesus, the culmination of inspiration and speaking directly by his divine authority, indicates this, saying in reference to the Mosaic law of divorce, "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives,"¹ and much more clearly in relation to his own ministry, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth."²

The principle of a progressive revelation is quite definitely set forth. At first and in the earlier times limited but still apparent and growing through the ages in intensity and fullness. Nowhere in other literature contemporary with these writings or of a later date will be found the coherence and adherence of spiritual thought and teaching.

There may be on the Assyrio-Ninevah

¹ Matthew xix., 8.

² John xvi., 12, 13.



inscriptions and baked clay tablets and in the Aryan Vedas versions of the story of the creation, in some respects very akin to the description in Genesis, indicating that the same idea or myth prevailed among other peoples than the Hebrews or their ancestors, but comparison brings out the great distinction. The writer of Genesis, whoever he was, takes the story and transforms it by the spiritual touch, bringing a definite God into direct personal relation with the creation and his creatures, so that the spiritual feeling is at once apparent.


So as to the flood! The biblical account differs in some particulars from traditions current among other peoples, but chiefly in this spiritual insight and expression. God, all and in all, is the undercurrent and sometimes the overflowing tide in all biblical narratives. Historians, philosophers, lawgivers, epic and lyric poets and tellers of stories, men sometimes wise and cultured, sometimes unlearned and ignorant, are employed, but the same Spirit is evident in

each and all of them to a greater or less degree, but always present.

It is impossible to conceive of mere men, uninspired from a common source, doing this so consistently through many generations. It is not according to nature, neither is it found in any ancient or modern so-called sacred writings outside of the Scriptures.

The Old Testament is greatly underestimated, if not repudiated, in some quarters, but in its prototypes and symbolization of that which was to come, in its records of men of greatness and achievement, of men from whose experiences we can learn how to live, and in its accounts of the dealings of God with men, it is unsurpassed, and not even approached, by any writings save those of the New Testament, for which it prepares the mind, the one looking forward and the other backward as well as onward with interchanging glances and together forming a co-ordinated whole.

We are bound to account for this truth, and can it be explained satisfactorily in any



other way than that "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit"?¹ The authors wrote as they were impelled by the Holy Spirit and his presence dwelling in them, handicapped by the limitations of the age in which they lived, but with their thoughts and emotions influenced and colored by Him, and this is what created the spiritual atmosphere surrounding and permeating the Scriptures, and gives them, taken together or in parts, their authority in spiritual matters. This is inspiration as applied to the Bible.

Considering it as a possibly continuing thing, is this sort of inspiration still given, or did it cease with apostolic times, and does our canon of Scripture close the record of specially inspired men and hence of specially inspired books? Many think that the Holy Spirit still inspires men to think and write. No one will be rash enough to deny the possibility, and in a certain sense it is true, but few are ready to claim that any man has

¹ II Peter i., 21.

produced a book which should be included in the Scriptures as we now have them.

Is not the reason found in the presumption that the Scriptures contain the whole content of spiritual truth that can be communicated to man, and these other books, though perhaps inspired by the Holy Spirit in one sense, are not inspired in the same sense or for the same purpose? That is, these later books do not contain new spiritual truth but simply iterations of the same truths as found in the Bible, or are commentaries upon or deductions from them, or their presentation in a different way. In other words, they are not original discoveries or productions of spiritual truths.

The Scriptures do contain such spiritual truths, not strictly original, since truth as a principle is eternal and universal, but original in the sense that unless the Divine Source had devised some other means of transmission, these spiritual truths in their richness and fullness and in concrete and comprehensible expression would never have been known to



the human race. Since the present canon was compiled, no author has ever written a book now extant worthy to be considered as to its possible or even probable inspiration by the Holy Spirit, who did not obtain his perception of spiritual truth either directly or indirectly from the Scriptures.

This does not imply that spiritual truth, new to us, is not to be sought or expected. The character of the Scriptures and the sayings of Jesus, often expressed in parables, is such that all and every truth does not lie upon the surface, but its discovery requires careful and long continued endeavor by those who are spiritually minded and are capable of working for and recognizing the diamonds in the mine. The treasure is inexhaustible but it is the man who seeks goodly pearls who finds the pearls of great price. On the other hand, so much of the spiritual truth is disclosed plainly that the way of holiness is made clear and "the way-faring men, yea fools, shall not err therein."¹

¹ Isaiah xxxv., 8.

A danger has existed always of misinterpretation of the words of the Holy Spirit as voiced in the Scriptures. Distinction has failed to be made between the inspiration of the authors and that of the record. Men have been able to ridicule Christianity, and many have taught erroneously, through their own ignorance of the proper and legitimate use and meaning of certain passages. Some have bolstered up strange doctrines and misled whole sections of the Christian church through this means. It was not very hard to do this. A "proof text," isolated, can be found for almost anything. The author of the second Epistle of Peter says, that Paul wrote his epistles according to the wisdom given him, "wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction,"¹ and elsewhere declares "knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private" (or special) "interpretation."²

¹ II Peter iii., 16.

² II Peter i., 20.

By what means then shall we know the words inspired by the Holy Spirit and their meaning? We must take the whole body of spiritual truth as we know it in the Scriptures, especially as set forth in the reported teachings of Jesus. Any verse or teaching out of harmony with that, or interpretation that is not in accord with what He says or directly implies, must be viewed with suspicion and probably discarded.

The work of the Holy Spirit really and without mistake can be known only through the Holy Spirit and the promise is given "He shall guide you into all the truth . . . he shall take of mine and declare it unto you."¹

The universal tendency of mentality applies; men discover in writings that for which they are seeking. We shall not be apt to misinterpret what He has inspired in the Scriptures, or fail to recognize in them his great work for the uplift and redemption of the human race through Jesus Christ, if we have the indwelling and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

¹ John xvi., 13, 14.

POWER

THE belief in the miraculous is not confined to the followers of Christ. The so-called miracle is something that appears to be out of conformity and inconsistent with our empiric knowledge of what we call the laws of nature; in other words, it is a demonstration of the supreme power of spirit over matter. What things would have appeared miraculous to our ancestors as, for instance, wireless telegraphy, are now accepted as the usual and ordinary, owing to the discovery and utilization of certain facts and laws of nature as to which formerly ignorance existed.


Knowledge has broadened, deepened, and penetrated, and in its light much that has been hidden has been made manifest. It is not, therefore, improbable that in the future many things now wonders and incompre-

hensible may be matters of every-day experience.

Many of the alleged miracles of the primitive fetish men, soothsayers, wizards, jugglers, and oracles, are easily explained, and in most cases found to be trickery, or the employment of natural agencies not then known generally. To the initiated, the machinery was visible, though there were instances of honest self-deception, but to the crowd it was the work of the god or gods and beyond human understanding. Many of this class also depend upon tradition or oral transmission, replete with exaggeration and mistatement, for evidence. Some are utterly trivial in character and others clearly mythical. The first thing to inquire about an alleged miracle in the past is whether it really did occur; that is, whether it has full, accurate, and reliable historical support. Those that may be claimed at the present time require the testimony of competent, reliable, and unbiased minds. The next thing is to strive to understand their character and purpose.

The miracles which Jesus Christ is said to have wrought are as amply supported by documentary accounts as any happenings in his time; better than most, and these documents have stood the test of examination by the keenest and ablest critics and adversaries. The best scholarship of the world has affirmed in general their authorship and reliability. If the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ be accepted, the greatest miracle of all, there should not be much hesitation in accepting the fact of the power in Him of the Holy Spirit to perform any or all of the wonderful works recorded.

The fact of his resurrection is accepted by Christians with practical unanimity, as resting upon a stronger foundation than many other current events of his age generally accepted, and this not blindly, but as the result of careful, painstaking inquiry and research. This one convincing miracle of all changed the distressed, disappointed, despairing disciples into rejoicing, fully



assured advocates of their new religion. Something happened. They believed not in the dead but the living Lord.

Looking at his miracles, they do not deal with trivialities, but healing the sick with a word; opening the eyes of a man born defective by a touch; recalling the departed personality of a man to his abandoned body by a command, even after four days' absence and natural decay had begun to take place. No machinery, no incantation, no opportunity for trickery, the simple touch or word, sometimes at a distance, and without contact or utterance of audible speech, the power was manifested. Instances occur when those afflicted with incurable diseases were cured by merely touching the border of his garment. "All the multitude sought to touch him, for power came forth from him and healed them all."¹

These, and such as these, have all the qualities of divinity. "For he spake, and it was done."² No mere man has ever even

¹ Luke vi., 19.

² Psalms xxxiii., 9.

attempted the like through like instrumentality or without it. The miracles so reported are therefore characteristically unique and no matter in what discoveries of so-called natural laws may eventuate, they must ever so remain. They are not sporadic exhibitions of the power of God. They were called by various names, "powers or mighty works," "works," "wonders," "signs," but, as another well says, "We read of 'signs and powers,' of 'signs and wonders' or of 'powers and wonders' but not of 'wonders' alone." They accompanied the coming of the "Good Tidings" into the world. "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit,"^{*} and accompanied it for the specific purpose of ensuring its acceptance and attesting to the divine character and mission of Jesus Christ.

Men always are sceptical of mere unsupported statements even by a man whom they think good, and would be inclined to absolute incredulity and doubt his sanity, if, uncor-

^{*} I Thessalonians i., 5.



roborated in any way, he claimed to be divine. Jesus recognized this principle; "If I had not done among them the works that none other did, they had not had sin,"¹ and the dreadful woes predicted for the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida were because they repented not when such mighty works had been done in them.²

When John the Baptist sent from his prison to ask, "Art thou he that cometh" (meaning the Messiah), "or look we for another?" Christ did not say, "I am He," but answered, "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."³ It was amply sufficient. "Ye have sent unto John and he hath borne witness unto the truth. . . . But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given

¹ John xv., 24.

² Matthew xi., 20-24.

³ Matthew xi., 2-5.

me to accomplish, the very works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."¹

The Jews said, "'If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered them, 'I told you and ye believe not; the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me.'"² He appealed to his own disciples to believe on Him "for the very works' sake."³ It is true that He once said, "The words that I say unto you, I speak not from myself; but the Father abiding in me doeth his works,"⁴ but He indicates that this is through the gift to Him of the Holy Spirit. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for he giveth not the Spirit by measure."⁵

Elsewhere Jesus Christ clearly ascribed at least one class of miracles to the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. He exorcised demons from those said to be possessed, by many men now supposed to have been victims of

¹ John v., 33, 36.

² John x., 24, 25.

³ John xiv., 11.

⁴ John xiv., 10.

⁵ John iii., 34.



insanity or epileptics. "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you,"¹ and when the scribes asserted that He wrought these miracles through the power of the prince of the demons, He asserted this to be blasphemy against the real source of power, the Holy Spirit.² As to curative miracles, Luke tells us "The power of the Lord was with him to heal."³

The crowning miracle, the resurrection, was not regarded by the disciples as an act of auto-resuscitation, or self-revivification, or of transmigration into a spiritual body by any power of Christ Himself, but as effected by the power of God whom they seem uniformly to believe acted through and by the Holy Spirit. Peter, in his address on the day of Pentecost, after referring to prophesy, proclaimed "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father

¹ Matthew xii., 28. ² Mark iii., 22-30. ³ Luke v., 17.

the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear."¹

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews begins his benediction, "Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep,"² and Paul had this idea very strongly. "God raised him from the dead."³ "We witnessed of God that he raised up Christ."⁴ "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you." "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead."⁵

On one occasion during his earthly ministry, Jesus appears to have delegated the power to perform miracles to his followers in connection with preaching, but even then He seems to reveal his knowledge that their work is to be that of the Holy Spirit, for He

¹ Acts ii., 32, 33. ² Hebrews xiii., 20. ³ Acts xiii., 30.

⁴ I Corinthians xv., 15. ⁵ Romans viii., 11, 34.



then tells them that they will be persecuted and brought before civil and religious authorities, but not to be anxious about what to say, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."¹ Mark and Luke do not confine this to a particular occasion but make the advice general.² They seem later to have lost this delegated power.³

When his earthly ministry drew to a close, Jesus made this promise, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father"; but tells them that it is expedient for them that He should go away, else the Holy Spirit will not come to them; that if He does go away, He will return and manifest Himself to them, in and through the Holy Spirit.⁴ There is good evidence for the belief that this promise of supernatural power was fulfilled in the case

¹ Matthew x., 1, 7, 8, 18-20.

² Mark xiii., 11. Luke xii., 11, 12.

³ Mark ix., 18, 28, 29.

⁴ John xiv., 12-23; xvi., 7.

at least of the apostles and perhaps in the next generation of the followers of Christ, but such miracles as they wrought were after the acknowledged reception of the Holy Spirit.

As has been indicated, all of the miracles of Jesus, with possibly one or two exceptions, were wrought as evidences of his divine character and mission, to attest his words, and convert all within his reach into followers of Him. The importance of the same class of evidence remained just as great for a time after his departure. The little group of Galilean peasants, however much they might have believed in the risen Lord, could not have induced men to accept of the new teaching, unless the Holy Spirit assisted with attesting displays of mighty power.

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, largely through whose teaching and influence Christianity became not an obscure Jewish sect but a world-wide religion, was the foremost advocate of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit dwelling in each believer, and his epistles are saturated with this idea. It must be re-



membered that when he went forth he did not have the Gospels to read or deliver in manuscript. They were produced later and their relations of events were then wholly unknown, except possibly by oral transmission or in some form with which we are not acquainted. In his work, therefore, beginning with the dispersed among the Gentiles, he found absolute need for this witness to his preaching and, like the other apostles, is recorded to have wrought miracles. "I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit."¹

The writer to the Hebrews voiced the common opinion of his time, that all the signs and wonders wrought in those early days were attestations to the message and exhibited the power of the Holy Spirit. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through

¹ Romans xv., 18, 19.

the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will."¹

It is impossible to draw any hard and fast line as to when the Holy Spirit ceased to manifest Himself by mighty works, signs, and wonders through individual believers, but it is certain that to a large extent He did so cease. Alleged miracles of a later time are in the main of a far different character and are often reported by biased witnesses and for the most part very inadequately. They do not appeal to the more spiritually minded, and seem to spring from the constant appetite of mankind for the unusual and marvelous, every generation exhibiting this atavistic tendency. Many are evidently manufactured for obvious purposes, and many seem to be products of superstition and imposition. Some are the result of the power of the mind over the body, entirely irre-

¹ Hebrews ii., 3, 4.

spective of direct divine interposition, and are well understood facts and processes in biology and psychology.

The purpose of powers or mighty works, works, wonders, signs, was accomplished. The truth had been amply attested, the Gospels and Epistles were in circulation and Christian believers were armed with the "sword of the Spirit," which is the word of God. Christ Himself deprecated the exultation of his followers over their power to work miracles, when He said, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven,"¹ thus emphasizing the importance of the inner spiritual life over the external and physical exhibition of spiritual power. By the time that Paul was well on in his ministry, he was compelled to write some very stinging rebukes in regard to the abuses that had showed themselves in the early church in connection with the real or imagined use of this power.

¹ Luke x., 20.

Christ also taught the futility of miracles as attestations, after information was open to all and the Scriptures available, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. After the death of the rich man, he is depicted as being in torments, and failing to obtain relief for himself, he beseeches that Lazarus, also dead, may be sent to his father's house, "for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." But the answer was, "They have Moses and the prophets"; (the Old Testament) "let them hear them." His reply, "Nay, . . . but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent," met with the response, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead."¹ Much more would this be true after the Scriptures were rounded out by the inclusion of the New Testament.

It would be hazardous to assert that no later miracles of the same nature or kind as those of Christ and of the early days of

¹ Luke xvi., 19-31.



Christianity have occurred, for the power of the Holy Spirit of course is unabated, but if necessity for them no longer exists, it is reasonable to suppose that the Holy Spirit does not choose so to move. Jesus Christ did not come as a peripatetic physician for all the physical evils and sicknesses of the natural life, neither did He go about making thaumaturgic displays. He came primarily as a physician for spiritual evils and his cures of disease were incidental to his going about doing good and, to repeat, were needed and employed as witnesses to his divine power and mission. Those of his followers were of a like character. They were not essential, but simply means to an end; that end being to convince men and establish the kingdom of heaven on earth.

What then is the explanation of the miracles and cures claimed to have been wrought in post-apostolic times? It is safe to say that none rest upon a sound historical basis that are not capable of understanding. Leave out all those detected as successful

trickery, there is still a residuum of marvelous cures from disease which are not imposture, except as to their claimed nature, but are due to perfectly natural causes though said to be wonders, or the direct work of the Holy Spirit.

It is well-known to physicians that there are pseudo-diseases, so closely counterfeiting certain incurable ones that diagnosis is mistaken. The patient is given up, as well as might be if the trouble were as indicated symptomatically, but someone not nearly as skilled as his own physician, sometimes a mere charlatan, takes him in charge, he recovers from the pseudo-disease, and great advertisement is made that he has been cured miraculously of the real thing!

There are, however, many genuine ailments that have been cured without the aid of competent medical men and, as these are claimed to be miraculous, it may be well to give them some consideration. The mind has a tremendous influence upon the physical. How quickly it can act can be seen in those



who blush. A sudden emotion, purely mental, produces a purely physical effect. So the sudden pallor produced by fear or shock. The will, purely mental, directs the motions of the body and its limbs, purely physical. The how may not be known fully, but the fact is indisputable. Fear will sometimes induce illness and disease. The apprehension habit results not infrequently in that for which it is looking. Despondency is first aid to the disease, not to the diseased. On the contrary, cheerfulness, coupled with confidence or belief in something or somebody, is a powerful influence for health.

“A cheerful heart is a good medicine;
But a broken spirit drieth up the bones.”¹

Professor Sadler, in his exhaustive volume, *The Physiology of Faith and Fear*, lays down this principle:—“Any and all procedures, practices, superstitions, beliefs, or systems of healing, no matter how nonsensical or whimsical, if they succeed in generating

¹ Proverbs xvii., 22.

faith and destroying fear, will, directly and indirectly, tend to improve the physical health of all who are influenced thereby." He further says: "Clairvoyance, magnetic healing, Christian Science, quackery, and other psychic and mental methods of healing, all utilize the same universal law of mental healing—mental rest, the generation of faith and the destruction of doubts and fears." This element of faith seems absolutely necessary to the usual or extraordinary cure of disease. Even Jesus Christ insisted upon it as a prerequisite to his miracles of cure and it is recorded of a certain locality, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."¹

It is not necessary, however, that there should be any religious element in this faith or confidence. Indian medicine men, Hindoo fakirs, mental healers, and all sorts of quacks have effected some undoubted cures of certain classes of disease through its instrumentality. It will not open the eyes of

¹ Matthew xiii., 58.



the congenitally blind, or restore broken or amputated limbs, or bring back life to the inanimate.

The large proportion of failures is usually ignored. It is the not infrequent successes that are heralded as evidence of the work of a superhuman or divine agency. On this principle, it is easy to understand the reported cures at Lourdes, or St. Anne de Beaupré, or through the use of alleged relics or bones of saints and all others of this character. Confidence and the elimination of apprehension work wonders; the mind thus affects the body.

In this we have an explanation of that somewhat popular form of religion, many of whose adherents dare to place a shallow and foolish but shrewd woman on the same plane with Jesus of Nazareth. The very name is a misnomer, for the belief is justly criticized as being neither Christian nor scientific. It proclaims that sickness and death are not realities, only suppositions of evil; the first at least can be banished by a state of mind

that has decided that it has no real sickness, and the condition can be relieved by meditation or prayer, either by one's self or by some trusted practitioner of this order.

Reiterating, if the patient can be gotten into this frame of mind by any means, if cheerfulness can be made to supplant despondency, if fear of the disease can be eliminated and confidence in the system and the healer maintained, there can be no question but that in many cases great improvement can be brought about and many cures established. But all this does not require at all or betoken the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. It is simply the evidence of a universal natural principle, ignorantly applied with a measure of success.

It may be asserted safely that Christian Science healers who practice their system for fees or remuneration are not vehicles of the power of the Holy Spirit, and do not possess Him in any special sense. The Spirit of God does not work for money! The thing



is hardly conceivable, and the light in which He regards this attempted traffic in his power has been clearly disclosed.

There was a sorcerer named Simon who lived in Samaria and amazed the people with his performances. He was apparently converted and baptized by Philip and was astonished at the signs and great miracles wrought by him. Later on, Samaria was visited by Peter and John, who prayed and laid their hands on the converts and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw this, with a view to increasing his own power he offered the apostles money, saying "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said unto him, "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou has thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee.

For I see that thou wilt become gall of bitterness and a bond of iniquity."¹

The gifts of God are freely bestowed, and the practice of asking, expecting, or even considering financial recompense for spiritual endeavor for one's own physical benefit, or that of others, or to make a trade or profession of alleged spiritual healing of the body, is utterly foreign and repugnant to the revealed character of the Holy Spirit.

The skilful physician is a necessity for serious physical ailments, and it only shows distrust of the Creator to refuse to employ the natural remedies which He has provided, and such men empirically have discovered and proven to be best adapted to combat and overcome diseases, real and not creatures of the imagination as we know by experience and common sense.

No one should say that prayer is of no avail in sickness. Prayer for recovery, belief in God's power, cheerful confidence that He doeth all things well and will raise us up if it

iii. 9-23.



be for the best, in the mood of not my will but thine be done; this state of mind stimulates strong and reasonable faith and tends to eradicate fear and dread, and therefore cannot but be of the greatest aid to recovery.

It is sufficiently clear that the evidence for miracles since the early days is very slight and that most, if not all, of the miraculous cures can be explained in a perfectly natural way. None of the authenticated cases fall within the definition of a miracle at the outset of this consideration.

The Holy Spirit, demonstratively, is here on the earth and in the hearts of men, but the miracles in which He now manifests his power are those of moral and spiritual transformation and the development of character and life, not less wonderful than those of another kind formerly wrought by and through Him for an express purpose long ago accomplished.

SERVICE

A FUNDAMENTAL and absolutely distinctive principle of the Christian religion is that God is a serving God. By many good people, it would be considered daring and irreverent in the extreme, if not sacrilegious, to make such a statement or even in secret thought so to consider the Almighty. God as a benefactor, condescendingly handing down gifts and benefits, or as a father dealing with his children, might be within the possibility of acceptance, though even this idea of fatherhood is not to be found developed in its true sense in any philosophies or theologies outside of the Scriptures.

God as a servant, a laborer, is something altogether different, and instinctively the unenlightened human mind seems to view it askance. Yet the dignity of labor is

upheld by the thought. God is a working God. The Scriptures are full of this side of his character. "Lo, all these things doth God work"¹; "How great are thy works, O, Jehovah!"; "Let Jehovah rejoice in his works"²; "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."³ "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day."⁴ "The Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." So spake Jesus the divine Son of God, taking on Himself the form of bond-servant.⁵

God had been working through all generations for the uplift and salvation of mankind, and rendered his greatest and culminating service in the gift of his Son to live and

¹ Job xxxiii., 29.

² Psalms xcii., 5; civ., 31.

³ John v., 17.

⁴ John ix., 3, 4.

⁵ Matthew xx., 28. Mark x., 45. Luke xxii., 27. Philipians ii., 7.

declare Him among men, and to die for their redemption. In and through Jesus Christ, this serving of men by God is made evident most clearly and without the possibility of dispute. Both God the Father and God the Son, knowing the frailty of humanity, its tendency to error and readiness to forget, realized the futility of all this work and sacrifice on their part without continued effort and service, and therefore bestowed the constant companionship of Themselves in the person of the Holy Spirit. "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."¹ Here again recurs the thought of the indwelling and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, but only as related to the service which He renders.

It follows, from what has gone before,

¹ John xiv., 23, 26.



that He quickens the conscience, and gives us a continually fresh spiritual vision; that He stirs us up by way of remembrance, "lest we forget." But, beyond this, for what special services are those who welcome Him as a guest indebted?

It is absolutely necessary to be born of the Holy Spirit, that is, to have his presence within us and to follow his guidance, to become citizens of the spiritual kingdom of God,¹ and that kingdom is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.² The witness to our citizenship is the same Spirit who joins with our spirits in giving evidence of that fact,³ and to the citizens it is given to know the mysteries or underlying principles of that kingdom.⁴ These principles are disclosed by Jesus Christ in a series of parables beginning, "The kingdom of heaven is like," and in addresses and conversations recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew.⁵

¹ John iii., 5.

² Romans xiv., 17.

³ Romans viii., 16.

⁴ Matthew xiii., 11.

⁵ Matthew xiii., xv., xviii., xx., xxv.

Taken together they may be termed the constitution of the kingdom. In it can be discovered the persuasive character of truth; acceptance and adherence to the truth; seeking and sacrificing everything for the truth; faith and the power of faith; self-denial and unselfishness; commendation of the child-like spirit and humility; course to be pursued when one is wronged by another; duty of forgiveness; repentance and obedience to command; duty of preparedness and fitness; faithfulness and diligence in trusts committed; kindness, benevolence, charity, and acts of mercy; definition of what is evil and defiling; condemnation and ultimate punishment for the persistent transgressor; commendation of the good and faithful.

These articles are but the development of the two cardinal principles of the Christian life, right being and right action. The second is a corollary to the first. If not right within we shall not act aright without. "A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."



"Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit."

"The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."¹ This needs no argument; it is self-apparent.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that the personality within shall be right in its thoughts, desires, and aspirations. The Holy Spirit bends his energies to service in this direction. He utilizes the conscience, as has been seen, convicting of sin,² that is, bringing home to man the sinfulness of sin; compelling the admission of personal guilt, and so stimulating to repentance. This is vital, for, unless there be this conviction or realization, teaching, exhortation, or the example of Christ Himself, will not serve to eradicate the sin or interfere with the continuance in wrong thinking and doing. He brings vividly before the mind and heart the

¹ Matthew vii., 18; xii., 33, 35.

² John xvi., 8.

life, teaching, suffering, and death of Christ, the power of his resurrection, and the assurance of pardon; there is no record of his ever glorifying Himself, it is always Christ. He causes us to see God in everything, and to realize that we have no austere judge, no stern taskmaster in Him, but that

“Like as a father pitieth his children,
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him,
For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.”¹

He makes us realize our new creation, and that we are reconciled to God; that is, our wills are in harmony with the divine will, and not running counter to the divine purpose. He is our helper when we stumble and fall, lifting us up and saying “Life is a conflict! Repentance brings forgiveness; God will give the victory; Fight on!”

The Holy Spirit helps us in prayer, which is not necessarily petitionary or oral, but may be in the nature of mental conversation

¹ Psalms ciii., 13, 14.

with God, a constant habit of mind. Such is the infirmity of our personalities that we do not know how to commune with the Divine Being as we ought without his assistance. Not only that, but He joins as our Advocate in our petitionary prayers, for "the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."¹

His constant effort is to induce the personality with whom He dwells to heed the admonition of Paul's final summing up of the inward duty of Christians, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on" (take account of) "these things."²

¹ Romans viii., 26, 27.

² Philippians iv., 8.

Through Him we may be filled with joy and peace in believing so that we can abound in hope.¹

He instills humility. We are too apt to congratulate ourselves upon our good deeds and works of benevolence and charity. He recalls to us the fact that though we live godly lives and have kept all the commandments, we are deserving of no self-praise; "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do."² It is only for the Master to say, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

The resultant of all these exertions with us and on our behalf is what is called sanctification in Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here then is the citizen of the kingdom of God ideally equipped and prepared. If he be thus complete within, he is furnished completely for every good work without.³ The doing in turn affects the being and aids

¹ Romans, xv., 13.

² Luke xvii., 10.

³ II Timothy iii., 17.



in the spiritual growth. "If any man will-eth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching."¹

It is a matter of the will, and the whole tenor of the Scriptures is that the will is left free. The unfettered power of choice is the only unconditioned gift of God to man, and individual and national experiences through all history have demonstrated that He always has respected this freedom. The Holy Spirit may strive to influence its decisions and may interpose a "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not" to its exercise, but his commands or prohibitions have no coercive force. He may point out the certain disastrous consequences of disregard of his pleading, and use his utmost influence to hold the will in check, but the decision itself is left to the human personality. Christians may fall and often do wrong, but it is against and overruling the entreaties, commands, and warnings of the Holy Spirit.

This explains many of the awful tragedies

¹ John vii., 17.

in the lives of individuals and of nations. The horrors of great wars, why are they permitted by a good and loving God, or by any possibility can they be pleasing in his sight or used by Him even as a means of discipline? By no means, except that He will not interdict the free will of man. If man chooses to make the earth run blood, He sorrows over the wickedness but will not stultify his own distinguishing gift. He may, and often does, make the wrath of man to praise Him, and retribution for these crimes sooner or later falls on the offender. "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,"¹ but He will not violate the human will.

Christ referred to this truth when He said, "Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh,"² and James writes "Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? Come

¹ Galatians vi., 7.

² Matthew xviii., 7.

they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? Ye lust and have not; ye kill and covet" (are jealous), "and cannot obtain; ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it upon your pleasures."¹ A striking comment upon the prayers of some monarchs and peoples! But James strikes the keynote when he says "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil things, and he himself tempteth no man; but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death. Be not deceived."² If we examine into history, past or now in the making, we shall discover that this is the poisonous root from which has sprung the deadly upas tree of every war upon the planet.

It is difficult to conceive of a war in which

¹ James iv., 1-3.

² James i., 13-16.

either side is equally right, and these scorching truths uttered by James will be found inevitably to have been the basic cause on one side or the other, sometimes on both. Any such sinful exercise of the will is abhorrent to the Holy Spirit, but, with Christ, often He too has been despised and rejected of men.

This hardly can mean that it is wrong to make war actively or defensively under any and all circumstances, for it may be initiated to eliminate the very things that James describes as the real cause of war, or to resist aggression arising from that cause.

The Prince of Peace recognized this possibility as applicable to earthly nations or kingdoms when, in reply to Pilate, He said, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants" (officers) "fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence."¹ That is, had his kingdom been an earthly nation or kingdom,

¹ John xviii., 36.

his officers would have resisted rightfully even unto warfare, this wrongful aggression.

Returning to the active and outward duties of a good citizen of the kingdom of God, they are as manifold as life itself in all of its relations. Micah thus sums them up: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what does Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy God?"¹ Add to this the obligations of brotherhood, trusteeship, social service, and of naturalizing others into the kingdom, and there is a fair epitome of the outward Christian life.

These principles should be firmly impressed upon every Christian, but every Christian has not the same active duties to perform or are they to be discharged in the same way. Some men appear to have no conception of active duty. They resemble great sponges lying in some crystal rill, absorbing and absorbing, but never giving out in word or action anything worth while, or in any way

¹ Micah vi., 8.

making evident their professed claim to be Christians. That is far from ideal citizenship in church or state. "Freely ye have received, freely give" is the word of the Master, transmitted by the Holy Spirit,¹ and it is to be remarked that He was speaking then of the duty of extending physical relief, not gifts of money. It was personal service He enjoined in connection with the proclamation of the kingdom.

This was quite plain to those immediately addressed, for the things they were to do were definitely defined, but in our day duty is not always so clear, and the first obligation of every man is to seek out and recognize his duty as an individual citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and when known to discharge it at any cost to self.

H. G. Wells has recently published a book entitled *God, the Invisible King*, in which he caricatures the Christian church, seemingly his quarrel being chiefly with the early Fathers and Councils and the

¹ Matthew x., 7, 8, 9.



Anglican branch. It is a lamentable production, in that his controversy is marred sometimes by vituperative epithets and misrepresenting language, sometimes by the utmost flippancy in handling subjects commonly treated by gentlemen with at least respect.

He ridicules with frivolous contempt the idea of the Trinity, and of an all-wise, all-powerful, infinite or omnipotent God, condemns all creeds and speaks confidently of the "outrageous mythology of incarnation and resurrection" and the indecisions of the childhood and confusions of the decay of Christianity. He sets up many men of straw and proceeds elaborately to their demolition.

But, like every other man, Mr. Wells has his *credo*, "I believe," and details it in this volume. His is the "renascent religion now taking shape." It had no founder, it points to no origins. It is the Truth, its believers declare; it has always been here; it has always been visible to those who had eyes to see. It

is perhaps plainer than it was and to more people—that is all. It is not Christianity, and the author plumes himself on that fact.

He paints a dreadful picture of God as affecting his own childhood, the “bogey God of the nursery maid” and of “priestcraft” and assails this artificial structure as the Christian God. His “God is finite.” “He exists in time just as a current of thought may do.” “Somewhere in the dawning of mankind he had a beginning, an awakening, and that as mankind grows he grows.” Yet, withal, he asserts that his “God is a god of salvation, that he is a spirit, a person, a strongly marked and knowable personality, living, inspiring, and lovable, who exists or strives to exist in every human soul,” and this is closely akin to a partial conception of the Holy Spirit. The thought is possible that He may be speaking to the personality of Mr. Wells more than he himself recognizes. The not infrequent anomaly is to hold in contemptuous derision yet derive a system of ethics from the Scriptures and the Christian


faith. Sacerdotalism and the errors of Christianity have much for which to answer, and may be responsible in large part for his unrestrained and abusive dialectics, so weakening to his arguments.

Consideration of this book has been given to so large an extent, because out of miry and miasmatic mental soil often spring pure and beautiful lilies of thought. For example, his presentation of the duties of citizens of the kingdom of God. "The outward duty of those who serve God must vary greatly with the abilities they possess and the position in which they find themselves, but for all there are certain fundamental duties; a constant attempt to be utterly truthful with oneself, a constant sedulousness to keep oneself fit and bright for God's service, and to increase one's knowledge and powers, and a hidden persistent watchfulness of one's baser motives, a watch against fear and indolence, against vanity, against greed and lust, against envy, malice, and uncharitableness.

"To have found God truly does make God's

service one's essential motive, but these evils lurk in the shadows, in the lassitudes and unwary moments. No one escapes them altogether; there is no need of tragic moods on account of imperfections. We can no more serve God without blunders and setbacks than we can win battles without losing men. But the less of such loss the better. The servant of God must keep his mind as wide and sound and his motives as clean as he can, just as an operating surgeon keeps his nerves and muscles as fit and his hands as clean as he can. Neither may righteously evade exercise and regular washing—of mind as well as of hands. An incessant watchfulness of self and one's thoughts and the soundness of one's thoughts; cleanliness, clearness, wariness against indolence and prejudice, careful truth, habitual frankness, fitness and steadfast work, these are the daily fundamental duties that everyone who truly comes to God will, as a matter of course, set before himself."

But to enable us to have such principles



and carry them out in everyday life, to help when evil threatens, to renew after sins, blunders, and failures, the work of the Holy Spirit is essential and it is impossible without his aid and service. The assistance and service must be constant. The Holy Spirit is no "week-end" guest, to be entertained over Sunday. He is rather our habitual co-dweller, residing within us the year round and through all the years. The man who does not have Him with him and heed his inspiration and admonition daily and hourly in his business or profession, or whatever his field of labor may be, is not a good Christian or citizen of the kingdom, however faithfully he may attend church, or assent to any confession of faith, or creed, or conform in outward observance to any form of religion.

It is not absolutely necessary to *talk* of the Holy Spirit or the religion of Christ, but it is absolutely requisite to *be* such as the Holy Spirit approves and to *do* whatsoever He incites. Christ had something akin to contempt for the mere talkers. "Do not ye after

their works, for they say and do not!" "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"¹ He likens everyone who hears and acts to a wise man, but everyone who hears and does nothing in accordance with the teaching to a fool.²

A man must serve others constantly, as God, in whose service he has enrolled, is constantly serving him.

The Holy Spirit is also the Comforter, and how much and often do we need that comfort. In time of business reverses, of financial failure, of any kind of trouble, of sickness, in the separation from those whom we have loved here "but lost awhile," what stoic philosophy is really of any avail? Many will remember how, when in childhood they stumbled and fell, or were ill, or had some trial, the presence and sympathetic words of the mother soothed and comforted, and in her loving arms was found a haven of rest and consolation. The comfort that the

¹ Matthew xxiii., 3. Luke vi., 46.

² Matthew vii., 24-26.



Holy Spirit imparts is like in kind, both springing out of an overflowing fountain of love. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."¹ "God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our afflictions," qualifying us to comfort others, "that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherein we ourselves are comforted of God."²

This thought might be expanded to any extent. The mother, while comforting, grieves with her child over the hurt. So God shares in the sorrows and afflictions of his children, while He serves them with the comforting ministrations of the Holy Spirit. "He heard the cry of the afflicted."³ "In all their affliction he was afflicted."⁴ "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."⁵

The most tender and sympathetic intimacy of consolation and comfort cannot exist

¹ Isaiah lxvi., 13.

³ Job xxxiv., 28.

⁵ Isaiah liii., 4.

² II Corinthians i., 3, 4.

⁴ Isaiah lxiii., 9.

without experience and community of suffering and sorrow, and therefore God Himself is revealed as a sorrowing God that He, by his Spirit, may enter more deeply into our sorrows and afford that inward comfort that the world cannot give and cannot take away. The experience of thousands verifies the statements and promises contained in the Scriptures.

Many have the idea that if the Holy Spirit is within them they should be immune from difficulty, exempt from sorrow, trials, and misfortunes, and protected against the wrongdoing of others. Not so! The service of the Spirit is to give consolation, endurance, perseverance, and final victory over and in spite of all these things. The serving God is thus within the sincere disciple, acting continually as the Teacher, Guide, Advocate, Helper, and Comforter, by and through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.



UNIVERSALITY

IN former days the conviction prevailed, and, whether conscious or unconscious, is not now eradicated entirely, that the Holy Spirit was and is confined practically in his revelation and work to the Hebrews and their progenitors, and to the professed followers of Christ. This idea can be shown easily to be erroneous, not countenanced by the Scriptures themselves and refuted by the records of other peoples. The Hebrew race did possess a special faculty for the acceptance and preservation of spiritual truth, and therefore quite evidently was selected to receive and transmit the fuller revelation in its richness and perfection.

Nevertheless, God left Himself not without a witness in all parts of the earth and among every people and kindred and tribe. "There was the true light, even the light that lighteth

every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God."¹

That describes aptly the general condition of the Gentile or heathen world; flashes of the Light here and there, but failure on the part of the many to recognize the quality of that light, and a still deeper failure to act up to the measure of light received. Imperfectly its gleams are shown, yet they cannot fail of recognition by us as the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

The North American Indians had their Great Spirit, and many of their conceptions of Him were not lacking in spirituality and power though darkened with gross error. The Polynesians likewise had an occasional vision of a great spiritual being, only typified

¹ John i., 9-12.



by their crude idols. In benighted Africa, there are also to be found some traces of a primitive looking upward. It is, however, among what we are pleased to call the more cultivated races that this light was most unobscured. Back in the early days, in the twilight dawn of history, are clear indications of the Sun, some time to rise above the horizon in full-orbed splendor.

In the great Assyrian epic poem of Istah and Izdubar, written probably two thousand years before Christ, appears this prayer:

"This day, O God! distressed, I cry to thee!
O goddess! be thou gracious unto me,
Receive my prayer, my sins forgive, I pray;
My wickedness and will arrayed 'gainst thee.
Oh, pardon me! O God, be kind this day,
My groaning may the seven winds destroy,
Clothe me with deep humility! receive
My prayers, as winged birds, O, may they fly
And fishes carry them, and rivers weave
Them in the waters on to thee, O God!
As creeping things out of the vast desert cry
I unto thee outstretched on Erich's sod;
And from the river's lowest depths I pray;
My heart cause thou to shine like polished gold,

Though food and drink of Nin-a-za [death]
 this day
 Be mine, while worms and death thy servant
 fold,
 Oh, from thine altar me support, protect,
 In low humility, I pray, forgive!"

With very slight changes, this would read
 like a passage from the book of Job.

In the Vedas, written ages before the prophets of Israel delivered their spiritual messages, is to be found the somewhat often cited hymn:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

"In the beginning, there arose the Golden Child,
 As soon as born, he alone was the lord of all
 that is,

He established the earth and this heaven:—

Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?

He who gives breath, he who gives strength,
 Whose commands all the bright gods revere,
 Whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is
 death:—

Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?



He who through his might became
 The sole king of the breathing and twinkling
 world,
 Who governs all this, man and beast;—
 Who is the God to whom we shall offer
 sacrifice?
 He through whose might these snowy moun-
 tains are,
 And the sea, they say, with the distant river;
 He of whom these regions are indeed the two
 arms;—
 Who is the God to whom we shall offer
 sacrifice?
 He through whom the awful heavens and the
 earth were made fast,
 He through whom the ether was established and
 the firmament;
 He who measured the air in the sky;—
 Who is the God to whom we shall offer
 sacrifice?
 He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm
 by his will,
 Look up, trembling in their mind;
 He over whom the risen sun shines forth;—
 Who is the God to whom we shall offer
 sacrifice?
 When the great waters went everywhere,
 Holding the germ and generating light,
 Then there arose from them the breath of the
 gods;—

The Holy Spirit

Who is the God to whom we shall offer
sacrifice?

He who by his might looked even over the
waters

Which held power and generated the sacrifice,
He alone is God above all gods;—

Who is the God to whom we shall offer
sacrifice?

May he not hurt us, he who is the begotten of
the earth,

Or he, the righteous, who begat the heaven;
He who also begat the bright and mighty
waters;—

Who is the God to whom we shall offer
sacrifice?"

These lines fall on the ear like the cadences
of the modern litany.

Among the Hindoos, there are many very
old Vedic hymns such as:

"Let me not yet, O Varuna,¹
Enter into the house of clay;—
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
If I go along trembling
Like a cloud driven by the wind;—
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

¹ Varuna is understood to be the vault or expanse of



Through want of strength, thou strong and
 bright god,
 Have I gone to the wrong shore;—
 Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
 Thirst came upon the worshiper,
 Though he stood in the midst of the waters;—
 Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
 Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an of-
 fence before the heavenly host,
 Whenever we break thy law through thought-
 lessness;—
 Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"

With a little alteration, could not this be
 ascribed to the author of the penitential
 Psalms?

Turning to Greece, Homer, who lived
 about the period of the Judges among the
 Hebrews, writes in the *Iliad* (Pope's trans-
 lation):

"The gods, the only great and wise,
 Are moved by offerings, vows and sacrifice;
 Offending man, their high compassion wins,
 And daily prayers atone for daily sins.
 Prayers are Jove's daughters of celestial race,
 Lame are their feet and wrinkled is their face;
 With humble mien and with dejected eyes,
 Constant they follow where Injustice flies;

Injustice swift, erect and unconfined,
Sweeps the wide earth and tramples o'er man-
kind,
While Prayers, to heal her wrongs, move slow
behind,
Who hears these daughters of almighty Jove,
For him they mediate to the throne above;
When man rejects the humble suit they make,
The sire revenges for the daughters' sake,
From Jove commissioned, fierce Injustice then
Descends to punish unrelenting men."

A noted Greek scholar, the late Professor William S. Tyler, comments upon this as follows: "In the first place, Sin (rendered Injustice by Pope) is here made to be the punishment of sin unrepented and unforgiven. In the second place, it is expressly taught that the gods are sometimes propitiated and turned aside from their purpose to punish sin, by prayers, vows, and sacrifices offered by the sinner. In the third place, prayers are impersonated and represented as mediators between heaven and earth, daughters of Jove and divine, yet meek and lowly, feeble and marred, who, when accepted by the



sinner, intercede in his behalf with the king of gods and men, but, if rejected, plead for double vengeance on his head."

As to ancient Persia, here are sentences in the Zenda Avesta, attributed to Zoroaster and supposed to have been written in Bactria, approximately twelve hundred years before the Christian era:

"I desire by my prayers, with uplifted hands this joy,—the pure works of the Holy Spirit, Mazda, . . . a disposition to perform good actions . . . and pure gifts for both worlds, the bodily and spiritual."

"I have entrusted my soul to heaven, . . . and I will teach what is pure so long as I can."

"I will keep for ever purity and good-mindedness. Teach thou me, Ahura-Mazda, out of thyself; from heaven, by thy mouth whereby the world first arose."

On the tomb of one of the early Egyptian Pharaohs, long before Joseph was sold into slavery in that land, the monarch caused to be inscribed this epitaph:

"I lived in truth and fed my soul with justice. What I did to men was done in peace, and he I loved God. God and my heart well know. I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, and a shelter to the stranger. I honored the gods with sacrifices and the dead with offerings."

If a true statement of his life, did not tell man some very near satisfying the requirements which the Son of man declared would be his test at the day of judgment.^{2c}

If we go to the other side of the world. Continuous lives a pure and holy life in Christ about five hundred years before the Truth was made manifest in the flesh by Jesus Christ, and his sayings have influenced millions of the human race. Of these he said:

"Worship as if the Deity were present."

"Faithfulness and sincerity are the high things."

"When you trespass, do not fear to turn."



"If in the morning I hear about the right way, and in the evening I die, I can be happy."

Instances like the foregoing could be multiplied indefinitely, but the foregoing are sufficient to show that the Holy Spirit was not absent from the world at large, and that men could, if they would, be worshipers of a spiritual God, and could know in large measure how to live so as to please Him.

There must have been men, like the seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, who walked in the darkness as seeing the light, and the Scriptures themselves evidence that there were not a few. The Incarnated Light, in addressing the Jews, said: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must lead and they shall hear my voice, and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."¹ That is, He had scattered and alien children of the light.

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul, the great expositor, makes this quite clear:

¹ John x., 16.

"There is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law; for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified; (for when Gentiles [heathen] that have not the law, do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith and their thoughts accusing or else excusing them one with another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ."¹

Matthew records the statement by Jesus Christ as to what this judgment is to be in a wonderful picture. The Son of man is to come in his glory with angelic attendants and open the dread assize; and before Him shall be gathered "all the nations," Gentiles or heathen, of course, included. It does not

¹ Romans ii., 11-16.



appear from the record to be a judgment of the Christian world but rather of the heathen world, for the findings upon which the judgment is predicated are not: "You were or were not believers in Me, and followers or despisers of the Truth as revealed by Me"; "You sought, or you did not seek, salvation through my atoning sacrifice and are, or are not, now claiming redemption through my grace." Quite otherwise; the test applied lies entirely within the province of what is termed unrevealed or natural religion.

The Judge identifies Himself with the poor, the needy, the stranger, the suffering, and the outcast, and says: "You fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, cared for the stranger, clothed the naked, visited the sick, and succored the prisoner. Hence, come, ye blessed! You did not do these things. Therefore, depart, ye cursed!"¹

The judgment for those who have had the offer of redemption through Christ and for Christians who have not kept the faith seems

¹ Matthew xxv., 31-46.

to be a different matter. Knowledge involves responsibility. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God."¹ "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins. . . . A man that hath set at naught Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? . . . The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."²

Peter was brought to a realizing sense of the possible existence of some good men everywhere and said: "Ye yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or

¹ Romans xiv., 10.

² Hebrews x., 26-31.



unclean." "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."¹

It is also interesting to notice that the writer to the Hebrews applies to Jesus Christ the words of the Psalmist—

"Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek,"

and calls Him a high priest, not after the Aaronic or Levitical order, but after the order of a Gentile or heathen "King of righteousness" and "King of peace," to whom Abraham himself paid tithes and received his blessing.²

We are not warranted therefore in adopting the theory or sharing the apprehension of those who have regarded the entire world, without knowledge of the Hebrew faith or of Christ, as utterly lost and condemned by God. The Light was there, and if men chose darkness rather than light,

¹ Acts x., 28-34.

² Hebrews vi., 20; vii., 1-17.

The Holy Spirit

in their choice and resulting life is to be found the sole ground of their condemnation.

Except here and there, men would not see the Light or be guided by it, and hence the land of the Vedas became a land of idolatry, the worship of animals, and of gross superstitions. Buddhists sought Nirvana, or eternal nothingness, as the goal; the Greeks were more refined idolators, or lost in agnostic philosophy; the Zoroastrians became the devotees of fire; the Egyptians adored the bull Apis and crocodiles; the Chinese worshipped their own ancestors, except as Buddhism was imported from India.

As time went on, dense darkness and ignorance prevailed in religious matters, reflected in the life and morals. Unrevealed or natural religion broke down under the test of experience, not because the Holy Spirit was absent, but because of the general inability or disinclination of mankind to accept and follow his guidance.

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul gives a detailed statement of how God had revealed



Himself in the world and was recognized through his works, and depicts vividly the abandonment of natural religion, and the gross idolatry and moral degradation of the world at large, explaining that "even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting."¹

This deplorable condition discloses the necessity for more than a natural religion, and for the clear revelation of a God who should appeal to the heart, mind, and conscience of mankind.

There is no basis, however, for the aspersions that the Holy Spirit had been idle, even in the deepest shadows. At the time of the Advent, men in many places and under varying conditions were wearying of their idols and abstract philosophies, and the better informed had realized to a large extent that their so-called religion was a sham, an unreality. In many quarters, scepticism

¹ Romans i., 18-32.

and agnosticism were widespread, and only the outward form of heathen worship persisted. Men really wanted something else more satisfying.

In Athens, Paul found an altar "To An Unknown God," which the Athenians had erected through fear of having left out some possible deity from their pantheon, and in the Areopagus, by request, made an address, using this as a starting point: "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious."¹ It cannot be said in fairness, that the world was wholly devoid of conviction of sin or unready to receive the new faith and listen to its appeal.

The drawing power of the religion of Christ is *sui generis*, and verifies the promises of Him who brought life and immortality to light through the "Good Tidings." "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."²

¹ Acts xvii., 19-23.

² John xii., 46, 32.



The Holy Spirit, since the time of Christ, has been able to shine upon the world with greater effulgence, carrying the Scriptures and proclaiming the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, through the agency of Christian believers. In addition to the direct command,¹ this is the valid argument for missionary effort. Jesus not only proclaimed "I am the light of the world,"² but He also said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world," and intimates that if there be a light it must shine.³ From what we have seen of the Holy Spirit we know that He is the light within the sincere Christian, and the efficiency and success of his labors are measured apparently by the degree in which disciples strive to be fit and willing instruments to be used by Him in his service to the world. The outcome of his work, yet far from completion, is modern Christianity.

A comparison of the world without the

¹ Matthew xxviii., 19.

² John viii., 12.

³ Matthew v., 14-16.

Gospel and the world as it is today is sufficient evidence of the abject need which existed and the wonderful change effected, in spite of the many lamentable defects and inconsistencies on the part of those nominally Christians.

As to *space*, the Holy Spirit is universal. In the old world and the new, among the islands of the seas, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. He is still working. The result of His service can never be known unless, like John,¹ we can in the Spirit visualize the great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the seat of Fatherhood and Majesty and uniting in the ascription:

"Salvation unto our God,
Who sitteth on the throne."

In point of *time*, there is with Him neither beginning of days nor end of life, but He comes within the range of our mental vision

¹ Revelation vii., 9, 10.



at the creation, when we are told in the first chapter of Genesis, "the Spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters." From there, onward through the centuries, his presence is revealed, and in the last chapter of the book of Revelation He joins in the invitation to the future life: "The Spirit and the bride say come." He is with us at the first and at the last, our companion at the beginning and at the end. Happy, thrice happy, the man who, by harkening to his still, small voice on the earth, shall be privileged to receive hereafter that welcome in the well-known accents of the Holy Spirit.







